

Moving From Prison to Productive Lives

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The Indiana Department of Correction is continually working to lower the crime rate and increase public safety through its re-entry programs. The state's re-entry initiatives follow the Transition from Prison to Community Initiative model sponsored by the National Institute of Corrections.

Gov. Mitch Daniels has addressed the need for successful re-entry of Indiana prisoners. This year alone, more than 16,400 offenders will be released into Indiana communities. Of all offenders in the DOC, 97 percent will be released.

One of the most innovative re-entry initiatives is the Plainfield Re-Entry Educational Facility, which is dedicated to preparing inmates for release into the community. PREF, a venture spearheaded by DOC Commissioner J. David Donahue, strives to ensure every offender is prepared to lead a productive life and is socially equipped to integrate into their communities, while serving the last six to 24 months of their sentences.

The facility focuses on education, health, housing, family, substance abuse and faith and character-based programs. We pay special attention to employment preparation because research shows employment is crucial to keeping ex-offenders from returning to prison.

This is why we're giving Central Indiana employers an opportunity to learn about PREF and to tap into a pool of qualified job applicants at the facility's first Opportunity Fair at 11:30 a.m. Oct. 26.

Attendees will hear success stories, financial incentives and the benefits of our educational programs during a lunch presentation. Participants will also be able to network with men who have been educated in culinary arts, building trades, logistics, hospitality or entrepreneurship. Others bring experience in trades like landscaping, auto body, plumbing and welding.

Employers have the power to combat crime and increase public safety in local communities by removing barriers in their companies that hinder hiring of qualified applicants with criminal records.

Recent statistics from DOC indicate about 3,000 inmates will be released into Hendricks County and the seven surrounding counties within the next three years.

The Oct. 10 Star editorial echoes DOC sentiments in the support of a "Second Chance" ordinance that would give city contractors who hired more ex-offenders a "leg up in the city's request for proposals process."

The proposed ordinance, which would also render ex-offenders eligible to apply for training programs like the governor's Major Opportunities Plan, could help those men and women learn skills needed to secure a job to support their families.

Unfortunately, the City-County Council's Rules and Public Policy Committee voted against the proposal last Tuesday, although the ordinance is eligible for reconsideration at the Oct. 31 meeting.

Although passing the ordinance would be a step in the right direction, its fate doesn't keep Central Indiana employers from exploring the idea of removing their own hiring restrictions. Those interested in the Opportunity Fair at Plainfield Re-Entry Educational Facility, 501 W. Main St. in Plainfield, can contact Brittney Dick by Friday: (317) 839-7751, extension 4112; fax, (317) 838-7548; or e-mail, bdick@doc.in.gov.

Lloyd is superintendent of the Plainfield Re-entry and Educational Facility.

Opportunity Fair

Plainfield Re-Entry Educational
501 W. Main St. Plainfield

For more information, [please click here](#), or contact:

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About The Department of Correction

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.

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